

UNCONFIRMED LINCOLN
VISITS TO INDIANA

DRAWER 11A

INDIANA IN GENERAL

71, 2009 DEC. 05/57

Indiana

Unconfirmed Lincoln Visits

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Marshall County Historical Society

MARSHALL COUNTY HISTORICAL CENTER

215 West Garro Street
Plymouth, Indiana

Phone WE 6-4728

October 31, 1962

LINCOLN NOTES

On July 10, 1962 the State of Indiana delivered title to the Lincoln Memorial in Salem, Indiana, to the Federal Government to become a national park, the first to be established in Indiana. A recital of this dedication appears in the Indianapolis Star on July 11. It may be very appropriate to now record the fact that Abraham Lincoln and a male companion at one time visited Marshall County and stayed at a tavern in Argos, Indiana which was located at 212 North Michigan Street, occupied now as a residence by Clyde Bowell. *

This legend is as told to me some 35 years ago by Corey North, a one-time resident of Argos. Mr. North stated that while at Argos he became acquainted with a very elderly lady who told him that her father ran a tavern at the aforementioned site. On one occasion, when she was a small child, Mr. Lincoln and his companion*, possibly a Mr. Clay, stayed there overnight. After supper was over, she came into the room where Mr. Lincoln was sitting, gazing into the fireplace. His companion called her over and talked to her as she was sitting on his lap. After a little conversation, he said, "You like me better than you do that homely man over there". Whereupon, Lincoln turned toward her, smiled, held out his arms in an engaging way, and, with this invitation, she ran over to Mr. Lincoln, sat on his lap, and talked to him.

Unfortunately, I did not write down the name of the lady or the name of Mr. Lincoln's companion. My hazy recollection is that she was from the Railsback family and that Mr. Lincoln's companion was a Mr.

from the Railsback family and that Mr. Lincoln's companion was a Mr. Clay.

The date of this visit is not remembered or recorded, although some elder citizen of Argos may be able to verify it. Also, the abstract of title to Mr. Bowell's property will record the various owners.

A person may only guess the reason for this visit, whether Mr. Lincoln was on a political speaking tour or a trip to Michigan where the first Republican convention was held at Jackson.

(I was well acquainted with Corey North for many years and knew him as a very honest and truthful person.)

The Marshall County Historical Society does not have the funds to mark this historic site but its members are hopeful that the small amount needed for a bronze tablet can be raised by subscription or by some good angel who would pay for it.

* The living room of Mr. Bowell's home still has the wooden strip around the room, under wallpaper, into which nails were driven to hang coats and hats of visitors. I understand part of the old log house has been incorporated into the remodeled building.

** Probably Cassius Marcellus Clay, who joined the Republican party in 1856 and was sent in 1861 as a minister to Russia by Lincoln.

Signed, *A. W. O'Keefe*

November 9, 1962

Mr. A. W. O'Keefe
Marshall County Historical Society
Marshall County Historical Center
215 West Garro Street
Plymouth, Indiana

Dear Mr. O'Keefe:

Many thanks for sending me the available information concerning Lincoln's visit to Argos, Indiana. I have read your notes with interest and they will find a permanent place in our files.

I do wish we knew the date of Lincoln's visit to Argos. If such a date were available we might be able to make a search. Of course, if Lincoln was accompanied by Cassius M. Clay we might fix the date as 1860.

I will be on the look-out for any clues to this visit.

Again many thanks for this information.

Yours sincerely,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RCM:md

R. R. 2, Box 4,
Lebanon, Indiana.
December 3, 1962.

Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry,
% Lincoln National Life Foundation,
Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Dear Dr. McMurtry:

While doing research in the old local newspaper files, I chanced upon a Lincoln story which may be new to you. At least I had never read it before and it is doubly interesting because it has Lafayette as its locale.

From The Lebanon (Indiana) Patriot of May 29, 1902, I quote:

"Occasionally a new Lincoln story bobs up and the following, printed in the Fowler Republican is the latest: 'Abraham Lincoln was in Lafayette once, in antebellum days, and made a speech. About that time the people down there were very proud of their artesian water and took Abe up for a drink. The chief mogul of the entertainment committee offered Mr. Lincoln a glass of the health water, and remarked that 'we have gone into the bowels of the earth for it.' After taking a sip, Lincoln said, 'It is my opinion you cut a gut.'"

Sincerely yours,

Ralph W. Stark
Ralph W. Stark

December 5, 1962

Mr. Ralph W. Stark
R.R. #2, Box 4
Lebanon, Indiana

Dear Mr. Stark:

Many thanks for the Lincoln story which appeared in The Lebanon (Indiana) Patriot of May 29, 1902. I had never heard the story before. It has a Lincoln ring to it. I will keep this story in our Indiana files and someday may have an occasion to use it.

Thank you for thinking of me in this connection.

Yours sincerely,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RCM:md



